

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 BIB-01 MCT-01
SSM-03 /094 W
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R 281802Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1438
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 12458

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SENATOR MCGOVERN'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UR, USK, XF, PBOR
SUBJECT: GROMYKO ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

REF: MOSCOW 12457

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING A DISCUSSION OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS AND SALT AT THE MFA AUGUST 26, GROMYKO SAID (IN RESPONSE TO SENATOR MCGOVERN'S QUESTION) THAT HE WAS "NOT TOO OPTIMISTIC" AT PRESENT REGARDING THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE CURRENT U.S. POSITION WAS

EITHER UNCLEAR OR ONE-SIDED. THE RECENT VANCE VISIT TO THE ME HAD NOT SEEMED TO IMPROVE CHANCES FOR AN EARLY GENEVA CONFERENCE, AND THE DIFFICULT BUT CRITICAL PALESTINIAN QUESTION WAS STILL UNRESOLVED. IN PARTICULAR, GROMYKO FOUND PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECENT CRITICISM OF ISRAELI WEST BANK POLICY AMBIGUOUS. GROMYKO FELT, HOWEVER, THAT U.S.-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE WOULD PROVIDE GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM AND HOPED THIS MATTER COULD BE CLARIFIED. DURING A DISCUSSION OF UN RESOLUTION 242 AND THE CURRENT PLO ATTITUDE TOWARD, GROMYKO ASKED THE
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AMBASSADOR, FOR GROMYKO'S "PERSONAL INFORMATION," IF THE USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO INTERPRET 242, I.E., INSTEAD OF AMENDING, IN A WAY THAT WOULD MEET PALESTINIAN CONCERNS. THE AMBASSADOR UNDERTOOK TO RELAY GROMYKO'S QUESTION TO WASHINGTON.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY. THE SENATOR INDICATED HE HAD

A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST, HAVING SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE'S SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE ME. HE HOPED THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD BE HELD, AND WONDERED HOW GROMYKO ASSESSED THE CURRENT SITUATION, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE USSR'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE PLO'S VIEWS. GROMYKO SAID THAT THUS FAR HE WAS "NOT TOO OPTIMISTIC," PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE US POSITION WAS EITHER UNCLEAR OR ONE-SIDED. THE USG CONTINUED TO SUPPORT ISRAEL, EVEN ITS "CURRENT EXTREME DEMANDS," AND SEEMED TO LACK THE DESIRE TO EXERT POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT.

3. SPECIFICALLY, GROMYKO CONTINUED, THE US SPEAKS OF RE-CONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE THIS FALL, BUT WE FEEL NOT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE HAS BEEN DONE BY THE USG TO THIS END. OF COURSE, OUR DISCUSSION OF THIS PROBLEM WILL SOON BE CONTINUED IN VIENNA. REGARDING THE ARABS, OFTEN THEY CANNOT AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION MUST BE RESOLVED. THE PALESTINIANS LIVE IN DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS, AND PEACE WOULD NOT SUFFER IF THEY WERE GIVEN "A SMALL PIECE OF LAND TO CALL THEIR OWN." ISRAEL MUST BE GUARANTEED EXISTENCE AS A SOVEREIGN STATE, BUT ISRAEL MUST RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS TO HAVE A SOVEREIGN STATE IN THE REGION. SO WHO GOES FIRST REGARDING THE EXISTENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE OTHER? "THAT IS WHAT DIPLOMACY IS FOR." CLEARLY, WITHOUT RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM THERE CAN BE NO CONFIDENTIAL

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OVERALL ME SETTLEMENT. OF COURSE, ISRAEL MUST RETURN OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS: WITHOUT THIS ISRAEL CANNOT BE SECURE. ISRAEL'S TRUE SECURITY DEPENDS ON INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES, WHICH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO SIGN, TOGETHER WITH THE U.S. AND OTHER INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS.

4. SOVIET DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL. IN RESPONSE TO THE SENATOR'S QUESTION REGARDING PROSPECTS FOR THE USSR'S AGAIN RECOGNIZING ISRAEL, GROMYKO SAID THAT AT PRESENT, WHEN ISRAEL "HAS MADE NO POSITIVE STEP TOWARD A JUST SOLUTION TO THE ME PROBLEM," SOVIET DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION WAS "ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE."

5. PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT ON ISRAELI WEST BANK POLICY. THE SENATOR NOTED THAT IN HIS VIEW THE U.S. AND THE USSR SEEMED QUITE CLOSE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE VIEWS OF THE ME SITUATION, AS INDICATED BY THE PRESIDENT'S RECENT STATEMENTS ON ISRAEL AND THE WEST BANK, A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AND THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION GENERALLY. AND NOW THE PLO SEEMED PREPARED TO ACCEPT RESOLUTION 242, IF IT WERE AMENDED TO RECOGNIZE THE PALESTINIAN CLAIM TO A HOMELAND.

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6. THE SENATOR ADDED THAT OF COURSE THE U.S. DID HAVE A UNIQUE
RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL. IT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND THAT THE ISRAELIS,
AS WELL AS MANY IN THE LARGE AND ARITCULATE AMERICAN

JEWISH COMMUNITY, TEND TO EQUATE -- PERHAPS
UNFAIRLY -- THE ARAB THREAT WITH
THE HOLOCAUST UNDERWENT BY EUROPEAN JEWRY
DURING WORLD WAR TWO. HAVING JUST VISITED
AUSCHWITZ, THE SENATOR HAD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THESE
DEEP EMOTIONS. BUT GIVEN THIS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP, THE
SENATOR FELT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS DETERMINED TO
INFLUENCE ISRAELI AS WELL AS ARAB OPINION.

7. GROMYKO RESPONDED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD CERTAINLY NOTED
PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECENT STATEMENTS, ABOUT WHICH GROMYKO
WISHED TO MAKE TWO COMMENTS. FIRST, WHEN ASKED HOW HE
REGARDED ISRAELI ACTIONS REGARDING SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK,
THE PRESIDENT SAID HE VIEWED THESE ACTS NEGATIVELY, AS COMPLI-
CATING RESOLUTION OF THE ME PROBLEM. BUT IN RESPONSE TO A
FOLLOW-UP QUESTION, HE SAID THE USG WOULD NOT ENDEAVOR TO
INFLUENCE ISRAEL ON THIS MATTER. THE AMBASSADOR INTERJECTED
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THAT THE QUESTION TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT WAS RESPONDING DEALT WITH U.S. PRESSURE, NOT WITH U.S. "EFFORTS."

8. SECONDLY, GROMYKO CONTINUED, THE PRESIDENT HAD SPOKEN IN FAVOR OF "SOME KING" OF PALESTINIAN ENTITY. BUT WHAT DID THIS MEAN? PERHAPS SOME FELT THAT THE PALESTINIANS COULD SIMPLY BE LUMPED TOGETHER WITH JORDAN. PERHAPS A "SMALL PALESTINIAN HOUSE" COULD BE PUT IN A NEIGHBORHOOD OF LARGER HOUSES AND SURROUNDED WITH ONE FENCE FOR ALL THE HOUSES. WHAT IS NEEDED, OF COURSE, IS A SMALL, INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE, WITH THREATS TO ISRAELI SECURITY -- WHICH HE DIDN'T ANTICIPATE -- EXCLUDED BY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT. THIS IS THE REAL QUESTION, AND ITS SPECIFIC SOLUTION SHOULD NOT BE CLOUDED BY VAGUE PRONOUNCEMENTS. OF COURSE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO BRING INFLUENCE ON THE PALESTINIANS, BUT THIS WOULD BE EASIER FOR US AND FOR YOU IF WE COULD REACH AGREEMENT ON THIS QUESTION.

9. PLO AND USG ATTITUDES TOWARD RESOLUTION 242. THE AMBSSADOR SAID HE WISHED TO CLARIFY ONE POINT REGARDING THE PLO AND RESOLUTION 242. REFERRING TO THE SENATOR'S OBSERVATION, THE AMBASSADOR SAID IT SHOULD NOT BE INFERRED THAT THE USG FAVORS AMENDING 242. OUR POSITION IS THAT AMENDEMENT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL. THE SENATOR ADDED THAT HE WAS NOT SAYING HE FAVORED CHAINGING 242, ALTHOUGH HE FELT THAT PALESTINIAN DEMANDS MUST BE NEGOTIATED.

10. GROMYKO SAID THAT WHILE THE PALESTINIANS HAD RAISED THE MATTER OF RESOLUTION 242, HE WOULD LIKE TO ASK THE AMBASSADOR, FOR GROMYKO'S OWN INFORMATION, IF THE USG WERE PREPARED TO INTERPRET RESOLUTION 242 IN SOME WAY THAT WOULD MEET PALESTINIAN CONCERNS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE A POSSIBILITY, BUT OF COURSE HE WOULD HAVE TO REFER THE QUESTION TO WASHINGTON. GROMYKO ADDED THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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HE WAS PUTTING THE QUESTION ONLY FOR HIMSELF, AND PERHAPS THE PALESTINIANS WOULD SAY THAT SUCH AN INTERPRETATION WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT.

11. SENATOR MCGOVERN ASKED IF GROMYKO WERE CONVINCED THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD NOT ACCEPT FEDERATION WITH JORDAN. GROMYKO RESPONDED THAT "AS FAR AS WE NOW KNOW, THE FAVOR A SMALL BUT INDEPENDENT STATE."

12. THIS CABLE HAS BEEN CLEARED BY SENATOR MCGOVERN.

13. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED.
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Message Attributes

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